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General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

First Committee
1st meeting
Friday, 27 September 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: At the outset, I wish to extend, on behalf of all members of the First Committee, as well as on my own behalf, our deep and heartfelt congratulations to the Governments and peoples of Timor-Leste and Switzerland upon their admission to membership in the United Nations. I look forward to the constructive and active participation of their representatives in the deliberations of the First Committee at the current and future sessions of the General Assembly.

Let me begin the First Committee's proceedings by extending a warm and sincere welcome to all Member States participating in the deliberations of the First Committee. I am confident that we will exert every effort in discharging our common responsibilities in a productive manner during the current session.

The General Assembly has bestowed honour and privilege on my country and on myself by electing me Chairman of this important Committee. My appreciation extends to all delegations for the confidence that they have placed in me. I will endeavour to accomplish the tasks mandated to this body in a manner that justifies the confidence and faith that you have so generously bestowed upon me.

Let me say, first of all, how much I appreciate the very kind gesture of the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium, Mr. Stéphane De Loecker, when he nominated me for the post of Chairman of the First Committee. As I undertake my responsibilities I will depend on the cooperation and assistance of the entire membership of the Committee. I will also depend on the valuable experience, knowledge and competence of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management, Mr. Jian Chen, and, of course, the Secretary of the First Committee, Mr. Mohammad Sattar, and his colleagues in the Secretariat, who will contribute greatly to the success of our work. I am sure that the First Committee will benefit from their experience, and we look forward to their support in dealing with the many important issues before us.

I am fully aware that the tasks assigned to the First Committee are complex and multifaceted. But with your help, guidance and indulgence, I intend to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to me with determination, devotion and impartiality to ensure that our work is carried out in an orderly fashion and that our endeavours will result in a successful conclusion. The tasks assigned to the First Committee are not easy. I will therefore count on the full and invaluable assistance and cooperation of all delegations.

Election of officers

The Chairman: Before proceeding to the election of officers, I would like to draw your attention to the decision taken by the General Assembly at its

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1935th meeting on 22 September 1971, concerning the procedure for the election of officers of the main committees. According to the terms of that decision, the nomination of candidates should be limited to one statement for each candidate, after which the Committee should immediately proceed to the election. The Committee will therefore follow that procedure today.

I shall now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Son Se-joo.

Mr. Son Se-joo (Republic of Korea): On behalf of my colleague — one of last year's Vice-Chairmen, Mr. Lee Kie-cheon — I am going to nominate Mr. Jamal Nassir Al-Bader of Qatar, who is seated beside me, to the vice-chairmanship of the bureau of the First Committee for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Bader began his career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar in 1983. From 1991 to 1994, he was chargé d'affaires ad interim at the embassy of Qatar in Khartoum. As a deputy director of the Department of International Research in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1995 and 1996, he was actively engaged in issues of international concern. Since 1997, Mr. Al-Bader has been a Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar and an active participant in the work of the First Committee. I am confident that Mr. Al-Bader's competence and valuable experience in the field of disarmament and international security will greatly contribute to the efficient and productive work of the First Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all the members of the Bureau every success as they take up their important positions and to assure them of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the coming weeks.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his nomination of Mr. Jamal Nassir Al-Bader of Qatar for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to convey through him to Mr. Lee Kie-cheon the Committee's appreciation for the distinction with which he carried out his duties and for the valuable contribution to the work of the First Committee that he made last year as Vice-Chairman.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and declare Mr. Jamal Nassir Al-Bader elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I shall now give the floor to the representative of Venezuela, Ms. Cedeño Reyes.

Ms. Cedeño Reyes (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me on behalf of the delegation of Venezuela to congratulate you, Sir, on your well-deserved election to conduct the work of the First Committee at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Secondly, I should like to express my gratitude for the support extended to Ambassador Milos Alcalay of Venezuela when he was a Vice-Chairman of this Committee. He has had to be absent from New York for a few days, but he asked me to introduce our colleague from the brotherly Republic of Colombia, Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas.

I am very pleased to introduce my good friend Ambassador Rivas, with whom I have worked for a year on this Committee, during which time I have learned to appreciate his intelligence and competence in disarmament, arms control and the maintenance of international peace and security, an area of such importance for the United Nations. Ambassador Rivas has played important roles in the Foreign Ministry of Colombia since the 1980s. He has served his country in various diplomatic representations, including as Secretary of the Council of Minister of the Republic of Colombia. He has also worked in the Colombian mission to the Organization of American States. The First Committee has been able to benefit from his thoughtfulness and experience since last year. We in the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States have nominated him for a vice-chairmanship of this Committee because we believe that he is the most appropriate candidate for that high responsibility.

You, Sir, may count on the cooperation and contribution of the delegation of Venezuela in accomplishing the work of this Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Venezuela for her nomination of Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas of Colombia for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to convey through her to Ambassador Alcalay the Committee's appreciation of his valuable contribution as Vice-

Chairman to the work of the First Committee at the fifty-sixth session.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas of Colombia elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I should like to nominate Mr. Razvan Victor Rusu for the post of Vice-Chairman of our Committee for the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Rusu is Romanian by nationality and possesses the very interesting attribute of being both an engineer and a specialist in international politics. Mr. Rusu is also, of course, an eminent specialist in disarmament. He has pursued this issue in Bucharest and in New York, where he has served since 1999. This has undoubtedly allowed him to make a valuable contribution to the work of our Committee. I should like to add that Mr. Rusu is also responsible at the Romanian mission for other political issues related, in particular, to conflict zones in Asia, including Afghanistan and Timor-Leste; in the Commonwealth of Independent States, including Georgia and Tajikistan; and in the Middle East and Africa.

In the light of his competence, I propose that the Committee elect Mr. Rusu to a vice-chairmanship of the First Committee.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Belgium for his nomination of Mr. Razvan Victor Rusu of Romania for the post of Vice-Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to extend to him the Committee's sincere appreciation of his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee in his capacity as Vice-Chairman of the Committee at the fifty-sixth session.

Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Mr. Razvan Victor Rusu of Romania elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Allow me to express my sincere and warm congratulations to Mr. Jamal Nassir Al-Bader, Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas and Mr. Razvan Victor Rusu for their election as Vice-Chairmen of the First Committee. I am certain that, with their experience and knowledge in the field of disarmament, they will make a valuable contribution to the work of this Committee.

Election of the Rapporteur

The Chairman: I give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone, Ambassador Sylvester Rowe, the Rapporteur of the First Committee at the fifty-sixth session.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): On behalf of the Sierra Leone delegation, I should like first of all to extend our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee and to assure you of our cooperation in your task.

I have the honour to nominate Mr. Mehmet Samsar, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations, as Rapporteur of the First Committee at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Samsar is a graduate of the Middle Eastern Technical University in political science and public administration and of Gaza University. Since 1987, he has held several positions in his country's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including in the department of bilateral political relations and as head of the evaluation section in the department of personnel. He has served in his country's military and in the Permanent Mission of Turkey to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Turkish embassy in Tashkent. He was Consul General in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan.

I am confident that Mr. Samsar will ably perform the task of Rapporteur of this Committee. Again, it is my honour to nominate him for that position.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for nominating Mr. Samsar of Turkey and for his kind words addressed to me. I should like also to thank him for his important contribution as Rapporteur to the work of the Committee at the fifty-sixth session.

Members of the Committee have just heard the representative of Sierra Leone nominate Mr. Mehmet

Samsar of Turkey for election to the post of Rapporteur of the First Committee. Since there are no other nominations, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Mr. Mehmet Samsar of Turkey elected Rapporteur of the First Committee by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I wish to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Mehmet Samsar upon his election as Rapporteur of the First Committee and I now invite him to take the place reserved for him at this podium.

May I at this juncture draw the attention of the members of the Committee to rule 110 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, which reads as follows:

> "Congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected."

I now call on the Deputy Permanent Representative of Hungary, Mr. István Posta, who will speak on behalf of Ambassador André Erdös, Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Posta (Hungary): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Hungary and on behalf of Ambassador André Erdös, who was Chairman of the First Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee during the fifty-seventh session. I am confident that your diplomatic skill and vast experience in disarmament-related issues will lead us to meaningful work in the coming weeks and to a successful conclusion of the Committee's business. Our congratulations also go out to the members of the Bureau, the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur, on their elections. The Hungarian delegation is pleased to work with such a highly qualified team of colleagues, who will preside over our deliberations in the First Committee.

In the coming weeks, a great number of issues related to disarmament and international security will be discussed in the Committee. It goes without saying how important they are in these days. We would like to assure the Chairman and the members of the Bureau that they will have the full cooperation of my delegation in discharging their responsible functions.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Hungary for his kind words addressed to me and the other officers of the Committee. I request the representative of Hungary to kindly convey, on behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf, our congratulations and gratitude to Ambassador André Erdös for the outstanding and skilful manner with which he presided over the deliberations of the First Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Bader (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): First of all, I would like to convey my warm gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the First Committee for electing me to this important post. I would like to reaffirm that I will do everything I can to make the work of this session successful. I would also like to thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his kind words addressed to me and for the excellent work he did in the course of his own work on the Committee during the last session. I also wish to say what an honour it is for me to work under your chairmanship and to perform the important task that has been entrusted to me. It is my firm conviction that, thanks to your vast wisdom and experience, the work of the Committee will be crowned with success.

I would like to point out that we in this Committee have a great responsibility. The First Committee has done a great deal of work to strengthen peace and security by promoting disarmament throughout the world. It is our hope that our contribution will enhance the Committee's effectiveness and make our world more peaceful and prosperous.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Qatar, Mr. Jamal Nassir Al-Bader, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for his kind remarks addressed to me and the other members of the Bureau. I look forward to the active cooperation of the representative of Qatar. I am confident that I can count on his assistance.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me very briefly to express my gratitude to the Group of

Latin American and Caribbean States and all my colleagues on the First Committee for the trust they have placed in me by electing me a Vice-Chairman during the fifty-seventh session. I would also like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and to convey to you, on behalf of the delegation of Colombia and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, our support for the work you will undertake to bring the work of the First Committee during this session to a successful conclusion. I would also like to express my thanks for the kind words spoken on my behalf by the representative of Venezuela in introducing my candidacy. I wish to offer to all colleagues on the First Committee my support as Vice-Chairman. I also convey to the Chairman my full cooperation in making this session a success and ensuring that the actions we will take will benefit international peace and security.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Colombia, Ambassador José Nicolás Rivas, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for his kind words addressed to me as well as the other members of the Bureau. I wish to reciprocate the sentiments, and I am confident that I can count on his very active assistance and cooperation.

Mr. Rusu (Romania) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank my Belgian colleague for introducing my candidacy. I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this important Committee of the General Assembly. I also wish to express my gratitude to my colleagues for having elected me a Vice-Chairman of the First Committee.

(*spoke in English*)

Allow me to assure you, Mr. Chairman, of my full support and cooperation, as well as that of my delegation, in your efforts to guide the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion.

The Chairman: I thank the representative of Romania, Mr. Razvan Rusu, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, for his kind words addressed to me and the other members of the Bureau. I wish to reciprocate those sentiments. I am confident that I can count on his very active assistance and cooperation.

Mr. Samsar (Turkey): First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the member States for the trust they have vested in me. Secondly, I would like to thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words in nominating me as the candidate for the post of Rapporteur. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I would like to assure all the member States that I will do my best and that I will carry out my functions in the Committee impartially and objectively. Thirdly, I also wish to congratulate the Chairman and the other members of the Bureau on their elections.

The Chairman: I thank the Rapporteur of the First Committee for his generous remarks and for his expression of willingness to cooperate closely with me and with the other officers of the Committee. I am confident that I express not only my own feelings but also those of the Vice-Chairmen and the Committee secretariat when I say that it is our intention to work in close cooperation with him during the current session.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I would first like to draw the members' attention to document A/C.1/57/1, containing a letter dated 20 September 2002 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee. In that letter, the President informs the Chairman that, at its 19th plenary meeting, the General Assembly decided to allocate 18 agenda items to the First Committee for its consideration.

Before proceeding to give a more detailed account of the programme of work and timetable that are being proposed, I would like to indicate that the tentative programme of work and timetable have been prepared in keeping with previous practice. A number of initiatives proposed over the past several years, including the Assembly's decision 52/416 B on rationalization of the work of the First Committee, have also been taken into account.

In this connection, I also took into account paragraph 36 of the annex to resolution 51/241, which says:

> "The First Committee and the Fourth Committee shall not meet simultaneously and may consider meeting in an sequential manner during the regular session of the General Assembly."

In accordance with the established practice, the First Committee commences its substantive work, as reflected in the tentative programme of work and timetable, on Monday, 30 September 2002.

With regard to the closing date of the Committee's work, members will recall that, also under the Assembly decision 52/416 B, it was agreed that the First Committee should make every effort to conduct and conclude its substantive work with the most efficient use of time and resources in not less than 30 meetings, and in a time frame not exceeding 5 weeks.

In view of the aforementioned, I shall make every effort, of course with members' assistance and cooperation, to conclude the Committee's work, as recommended by the General Committee, on Friday, 1 November 2002. Therefore, the Committee's substantive session will run from Monday, 30 September to Friday, 1 November, giving the Committee a maximum of 29 meetings to consider the agenda items allocated by the General Assembly.

Here I would like to point out that last year the Committee had at its disposal a total of 30 meetings, of which it utilized 24. Therefore, I believe that if we make a concerted effort and a sincere attempt to utilize our resources effectively and efficiently, we can indeed accomplish our task without any undue difficulties.

In this regard, I would like to point out that the question of Antarctica, which is included in the agenda this year, was not included in the agenda last year. Therefore, as indicated in the draft programme of work and timetable, the last three meetings will be devoted to the question of Antarctica.

Following consultations with the individual delegations, and drawing upon the experience that has evolved over the years, I have arrived at the proposed programme of work and timetable, as contained in document CRP.1. I now draw the attention of members to this document. It will be observed that consideration of items allocated to the First Committee will proceed in four phases, as reflected in this tentative programme of work and timetable.

The Committee will begin its substantive session on Monday, 30 September, and will hold a single general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items allocated to the Committee. A total of 10 meetings from Monday, 30 September to Friday, 11 October, will be devoted to this phase. The list of speakers for this phase is open, and a number of delegations have already inscribed their names. I invite those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate kindly to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible. It should be noted that the deadline for the closure of the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be Monday, 30 September, at 6.00 p.m.

I would like to appeal to delegations to limit the delivery of their statements, if at all possible, to 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity, and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. This will enable all those delegations wishing to participate in the general debate to do so within the short time allocated to that purpose.

The next phase of the Committee's work will be the thematic discussion on item subjects, as well as introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related security agenda items. This phase will cover the period from Monday, 14 October to Friday, 18 October, and a total of six meetings will be allocated. I hope that during that phase delegations will make specific comments on the topics to be considered. In this regard, I would like to inform members that, in order to facilitate the Committee's work and to give sufficient time to delegations for consultations, the deadline for submission of draft resolutions and decisions on all disarmament and, later, international security agenda items will be Thursday, 10 October, at 6.00 p.m.

With your cooperation, I intend to maintain the deadline for submission of draft resolutions, and I therefore appeal that you kindly adhere strictly to this deadline. Delegations are encouraged to introduce their draft resolutions as early as possible in order to enable those delegations wishing to seek the necessary instructions from their capitals to do so, as well as to carry out consultations on those draft resolutions so as to ensure that the texts finally adopted reflect the greatest possible degree of consensus.

I wish to emphasize that early submission of draft resolutions will certainly give an opportunity to members of the Committee to comment on them during the second phase of work, which is intended for that purpose. Furthermore, it is imperative that delegations submit the draft resolutions that could entail programme budget implications as early as possible in order to enable the Secretariat to prepare on time the necessary programme budget implications. It would also enable the Committee to take action on them, with a view to meeting the mandatory deadline required for

their submission to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

In this regard, I would like to inform delegations that the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) and the Fifth Committee need adequate time to review the programme budget implications of a draft resolution before it can be acted upon by the Assembly.

The next phase of the Committee's work — namely, action on all draft resolutions and decisions — will be from Monday, 21 October to Tuesday, 29 October. In accordance with the Committee's programme of work and timetable, a total of 10 meetings have been devoted to this stage of the Committee's work.

It is my intention to retain the voting procedure involving the grouping of draft resolutions by clusters during this session. In due time, I shall present specific proposals concerning this matter.

The last phase of the Committee's work will be devoted to general debate on, consideration of and action on draft resolutions tabled under agenda item 59, entitled "Question of Antarctica". The Committee will have a total of three meetings, from Wednesday, 30 October to Friday, 1 November, at its disposal for the consideration of that agenda item. The deadline for closure of the list of speakers for the general debate, as well as the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under that agenda item, will be Wednesday, 30 October, at 6 p.m.

Based on the work programme and timetable now before you, it is my belief, as I stated earlier, that we are in a position to officially consider all the agenda items allocated to us within the available time and successfully conclude our work by Friday, 1 November 2002.

I should like to conclude my remarks by reminding delegations of the need to maintain the requisite degree of flexibility in the process of implementing the draft programme of work and timetable, but, of course, only to the extent that this will enhance the effectiveness of the organization of our work.

As you may recall, this draft programme of work and timetable was considered and approved *ad referendum* at the informal meeting of the Committee convened on Wednesday, 25 September. May I therefore take it that the draft programme of work and timetable meet the approval of the Committee. I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

I should like now to draw your attention to the relevant rules and recommendations of the General Assembly that affect the work of the Main Committees, including those contained in decision 34/401, in particular the provisions dealing with explanations of vote, rights of reply and budgetary and financial questions, which I intend to apply with the cooperation and assistance of all members of this Committee.

In order to make full use of the time and facilities available to the Committee, I intend, with your cooperation and support, to open meetings of the Committee promptly at 10 a.m. and at 3 p.m., and I shall endeavour to close meetings at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. sharp, respectively.

In this regard, I appeal to all speakers, especially the first three speakers at a given meeting, to kindly be present in the Conference Room on time. I also urge all other members of the Committee to kindly attend the meeting of the Committee on time, in person or have a representative of your delegation present. I wish to emphasize the importance of punctuality in the interest of ensuring an effective and orderly organization of our work and achieving economy for the Organization. I trust that delegations will strictly observe punctuality.

At the same time, I wish to point out that it is my intention to convene meetings of the Committee when a sufficient number of speakers are inscribed on the list of speakers. As a general rule, we should have no less than eight speakers inscribed on the list for any given meeting, so that we can utilize the time and resources available to us in the most effective manner possible and obviate the need to close our meetings early for lack of speakers.

The resources allocated to meetings may, if cancelled at an appropriate time, be released for other meetings held within or outside the framework of the First Committee. In this connection, I would like to inform you that during the main part of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly the First Committee utilized 74% of its allocated conference resources and lost six hours and thirty minutes owing to late starting and early adjournments of meetings, a slight

improvement of the use of time compared to the previous year.

As you can see, the First Committee's utilization factor of conference resources has still been below the benchmark of 80%. In this regard, I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort in order to enable the Chair to begin meetings on time, and further improve the record of utilization of the conference facilities available to the Committee.

I wish to draw the Committee's attention to agenda item 5, entitled "Election of the officers of the Main Committees", in particular rule 99, section A, of the rules of procedure, which, as amended by Assembly resolution 56/509 of 8 July 2002, reads as follows: "All the Main Committees shall, at least three months before the opening of the session, elect a Chairman. Elections of the other officers provided for in rule 103, shall be held at the latest by the end of the first week of the session."

In view of the above, I would like to propose that the First Committee, in accordance with the aforementioned resolution, should consider this item in June 2003, some three months before the opening of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. I hear no objection. I shall take it that the Committee wishes to proceed accordingly.

It was so decided.

Last but not least, I would like to appeal to the delegations to kindly switch off your cellular phones during the proceedings of the Committee. I hope that this too will meet with the Committee's understanding and full support.

At this stage, I wish to give the floor to the Secretary of the First Committee to inform the Committee of certain matters pertaining to the proceedings of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): I would like to bring to the attention of delegations the following points that are related to the organization of the work of the Committee.

As members may recall, the General Assembly has once again decided to depart at this session from the rule that one-quarter of Members must be present before a meeting of a Main Committee may be declared open and a debate permitted to proceed.

The Assembly made this recommendation on the understanding that such a departure from the rules did not involve any permanent change in the relevant provision of rule 67[108] of the rules of procedure pertaining to the quorum for the opening of meetings, whereby the majority of members must be present for any decision to be taken.

As indicated in the programme of work and timetable, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items will be closed on Monday, 30 September, at 6 p.m. A number of delegations have already indicated their intention to participate in the debate, and the Secretariat has taken note of those requests. Delegations wishing to participate in the general debate are asked to kindly inscribe their names on the list of speakers at their earliest convenience.

As you noted in your statement, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee are requested to submit draft resolutions and decisions, especially those draft resolutions with programme budget implications, as far in advance as possible, in order to allow sufficient time for the preparation by the Secretariat of estimated expenditures and for consideration by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

In this regard, I would like to request members of the Committee to note that draft resolutions, amendments and the names of sponsors thereof should be submitted to the Secretariat of the Committee in writing to ensure accuracy and avoid any possible misunderstanding.

Requests for the use of conference rooms for group meetings should also be submitted in writing as early as possible, so that the necessary arrangements may be made in time.

I would like to inform members that document A/C.1/57/INF.1 will list, for the purpose of information and ready reference, all documents of the First Committee. It will be made available to the Committee on Monday, 30 September. That document will be updated as appropriate.

I would also like to inform you that document A/C.1/57/3, containing lists of the membership of the Committee, will also be circulated on Monday, 30 September. In this connection, delegations are

requested to kindly submit their lists of membership to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Delegations are further requested to kindly provide the Conference officer with a minimum of 30 copies of all prepared statements for conference-servicing purposes. It should be noted that these copies are in addition to the 300 copies required for general distribution among delegations, specialized agencies, and observers.

I would like to give you, Mr. Chairman, the other officers of the Committee and all delegations the firmest assurances of the support and cooperation of the Secretariat of the First Committee, of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management.

The Chairman: As decided, the Committee will begin its substantive work on Monday, 30 September, at 10 a.m. sharp in this Conference Room.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.